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C O N F I D E N T I A L ABUJA 002872

SIPDIS

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TAGS: PREL SNAR PGOV MOPS MASS IV NI

SUBJECT: NIGERIA: AMBASSADOR DISCUSSES COUNTERNARCOTICS,
THE ICC AND COTE D'IVOIRE WITH NSA MOHAMMED

REF: STATE 192375

CLASSIFIED BY AMBASSADOR HOWARD F. JETER. REASON 1.5 (B) AND (D).

¶1. (C) Counternarcotics: During a brief October 10 meeting with NSA Aliyu Mohammed, Ambassador Jeter underscored our concern regarding the modest funding the GON had provided its NDLEA this year. The Ambassador noted that last year, NDLEA funding was supplemented toward the end of the year, there were no signs of a similar infusion now. Ambassador Jeter told Mohammed the NDLEA funding levels would be a factor in the upcoming USG narcotic certification process.

¶2. (C) Saying that he understood our position, NSA Mohammed attributed the NDLEA/Presidency problem to the current political bickering between the President and the National Assembly. The Executive-Legislative impasse had choked the flow of funds for many Ministries and agencies, he asserted. The NSA stated that he would raise the issue with President Obasanjo and the Justice Minister at their next meeting.
(Note: Ambassador gave this same demarche to Attorney General Agabi. End note.)

¶3. (C) ICC-Article 98: Ambassador Jeter made reftel demarche, underscoring that Nigeria's interests dovetailed with ours, given the country's active role in African and international peacekeeping missions. Unlike Foreign Minister Lamido who had registered strong opposition when we broached the subject on an Article 98 agreement with him, Mohammed took on board our arguments and seemed interested in exploring possibilities. He suggested that we send the draft agreement to him so that he can confer with the Minister of Justice and Minister of Defense. The NSA also suggested that the Ambassador also demarche these senior officials. He did not include the name of FM Lamido among those he would consult. (Note: The draft agreement has been sent to the NSA. End note.)

¶4. (C) Cote d'Ivoire: Mohammed stated Nigeria supported the Gbagbo government but stressed the only solution was to negotiate. Nigeria shared our concern that the attempt at a military solution could further destabilize Cote d'Ivoire and drag its immediate neighbors into the fray. Already Charles Taylor was offering the use of his territory to counterattack the rebels. Mohammed stated President Obasanjo remained engaged and recently held telephone conversations with Chirac, Annan and Kufuor.

¶5. (C) When asked whether Obasanjo's offer to provide "safehaven" to the rebels still stood, Mohammed explained the offer was not to extract all the rebels, only the leadership. Nigeria did not know how many rebels there were, so it would not make an open-ended commitment to take them all, he said. Inviting several hundred rebellious Ivorians to Nigeria would only turn Abidjan's headache into Abuja's, the NSA concluded.
JETER